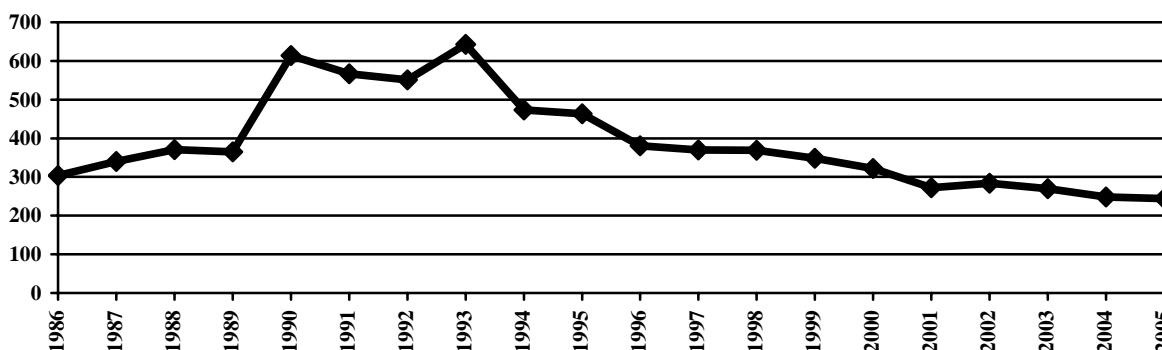


AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

describes an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempts are included since it is not necessary that injury result when a gun, knife, or other weapon is used which could and probably would result in serious personal injury if the crime were successfully completed.

**Twenty Year Review:
Aggravated Assault in Cambridge, 1986-2005**



248 reported in 2004 • 246 reported in 2005

Analysis of the past twenty years shows that aggravated assault reached its peak in the early 1990's. Between 1984 and 1989, Cambridge registered about 350 incidents per year; in 1990, it suddenly jumped by 41% to an unprecedented 614 reports. It peaked at 643 in 1993 and has been on a steady decline over the past ten years. Within the last five years, aggravated assaults have averaged 265 incidents a year, a 26% decrease from the five previous years.

Assault is a violent crime that typically arises in "the heat of the moment". Unlike the crime of robbery, assault seldom involves a motivation of personal gain. Offenders in aggravated assaults will often regret the incident subsequent to its occurrence, as the offender typically knows his or her victim.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS FROM 2003 TO 2005

NEIGHBORHOOD	2003	2004	2005
East Cambridge	23	27	22
M.I.T. Area	6	4	7
Inman/Harrington	30	31	20
Area 4	53	48	51
Cambridgeport	32	37	29
Mid-Cambridge	16	17	26
Riverside	37	24	28
Agassiz	1	3	3
Peabody	15	10	9
West Cambridge	13	13	15
North Cambridge	34	28	26
Cambridge Highlands	3	1	3
Strawberry Hill	7	4	5
Unknown	1	1	0
	270	247	244
*Please note that 1 incident in 2003, and 1 incident in 2004 occurred at unknown locations, therefore these incidents were not included in this breakdown.			

Aggravated assault is a very serious crime and is not taken lightly by the Cambridge Police. The severity of aggravated assault lies in the serious injury caused to victims, which can range from bruises to knife or gun wounds. Approximately 9% of 2005 aggravated assaults resulted in serious to life threatening injuries; over a third of incidents resulted in no injury, as the victim was merely threatened with the use of a weapon.

IN FOCUS: DOMESTIC ASSAULTS

A good portion of the fluctuation in the rate of incidents can be attributed to the frequency of which the crime is *reported* rather than the frequency of its actual occurrence. One area with a historically low reporting rate is domestic assault. As domestic violence awareness has increased over the last decade, so has the willingness of domestic violence victims to report abuse to the police. A quarter of 2005 aggravated assaults were domestic incidents. Over the past five years the rate of domestic incidents has been closer to about a third of all reported incidents.

Despite advances made by domestic violence victim advocates in recent years, experts estimate that between 60 and 80% of domestic assaults are never reported to the police. However, lack of reporting is not unique to domestic incidents. It is very likely that factors including apathy, fear of police contact, embarrassment, and other factors lead to underreporting of various assaults involving acquaintances, gangs, and conflicts among the homeless. Due to the estimated high rate of underreporting, *assault statistics must be viewed with extreme care.*

Since domestic assaults and assaults among acquaintances dominate the percentages, the crime naturally registers higher in areas that have a high residential population. These neighborhoods include Area 4, Cambridgeport, and Riverside. Domestic assaults and other domestic crimes are reviewed in the *Domestic Crimes* section of this report.

NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS AND TRENDS OBSERVED IN 2005

The following is a synopsis of neighborhoods with concentrations of particular aggravated assault categories as well as detailed accounts of some of the most serious incidents of the year (not including domestic incidents).

- **NEIGHBORHOODS:**

- **Inman/Harrington** experienced the greatest decrease in aggravated assaults, declining by 35%, followed by **Cambridgeport**, which experienced a 22% decrease. **Mid-Cambridge** incurred the most notable increase, a 53% rise over 2004.
- **Riverside** and **Area 4** were the top areas of bar and alcohol related incidents, followed by **Cambridgeport**. This type of activity, which was highest in the Central Square vicinity, can be attributed to the high density of foot traffic around restaurants, bars and nightclubs in the area, particularly in the nighttime.
- **Area 4** experienced a large number of juvenile/gang related aggravated assaults. Similar to incidents in 2004, in 2005 many juvenile incidents citywide involved the use of a knife or handgun, but the use of a BB gun was also reported in three of the 21 reported juvenile/gang assaults.
- Two-thirds of the incidents involving homeless individuals took place in **Area 4**, the Central Square area, where there is a large homeless population. The typical homeless incident will involve homeless on homeless assaults, usually among acquainted individuals.

Relationships

Another way to look at aggravated assaults is to classify the relationship between the offender and the victim. Many, but not all, of the assault categorizations are based on this relationship. This list shows the relationship between the offender and the victim in the 246 aggravated assaults in 2005:

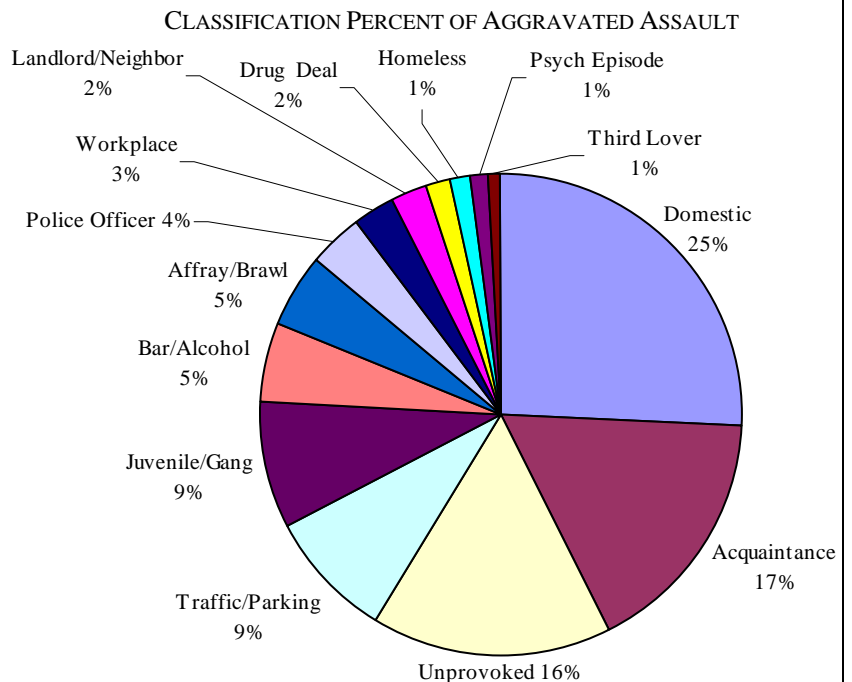
Relationship	Total	%
Stranger	81	33%
Acquaintance	60	25%
Romantic Partner	19	8%
Unknown	13	5%
Ex-Romantic Partner	11	5%
Parent/Child/Step Parent/Step Child	9	4%
Neighbor	8	3%
Spouse	8	3%
Sibling	7	3%
Co-Worker/Employee	5	2%
Client/Patron	5	2%
Schoolmate	5	2%
Roommate	3	1%
Grandparent/Grandchild/Cousin	3	1%
Patron/Client	2	1%
Ex-Spouse	2	1%
Third Lover	2	1%
Teacher/Coach	1	0%

- Unprovoked incidents were highest in **North Cambridge**. However, there was no discernable pattern to these incidents, and the numbers may be credited to the density of residences in the neighborhood.
- The most serious (non-domestic) incidents this year were unrelated events. The following incidents are still under investigation.
 - One incident this year took place in Jefferson Park in August, when an unknown suspect stabbed a local man. The victim was unable to provide much information subsequent to the incident.
 - In December, a man was shot in the vicinity of MIT, near where he worked, by a man known to his family. The Hamilton victim was located, and promptly transported to the hospital.
- Due to prompt police response and on scene investigations an arrest was made in approximately 38% of the assaults at the scene of the crime.
- See the map on page 39 which show all aggravated assaults this year in which a handgun was used or threatened.

Protect yourself!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 137 for tips on how you can protect against becoming a victim of assault, and what do in case of an assault or abuse.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CLASSIFICATIONS

TYPE	2004	2005
Domestic	84	63
Acquaintance	37	41
Unprovoked	27	39
Juvenile/Gang	18	21
Traffic/Parking	15	21
Bar/Liquor	10	13
Affray/Brawl	17	12
On Police Officer	7	9
Workplace	13	7
Landlord/Neighbor	4	6
Drug Deal	1	4
Homeless	9	3
Psychotic Episode	1	3
Third Lover	0	2
Shop Owner/Patron	5	0



SIMPLE ASSAULT

594 reported in 2004 • 531 reported in 2005

SIMPLE ASSAULT CATEGORIZATION			
Categorization	2004	2005	% Change 04-05
Domestic	222	203	-9%
Acquaintance	89	78	-12%
Unprovoked	58	44	-24%
Traffic/Parking	33	39	18%
Workplace	35	32	-9%
Juvenile/Gang	40	30	-25%
Bar/Alcohol	35	24	-31%
Police Officer	27	22	-19%
Shop Owner/Patron	15	22	47%
Homeless	10	17	70%
Landlord/Neighbor	22	12	-45%
Psychotic Episode	3	4	33%
Third Lover	5	2	-60%
Other	0	2	NA
Total	594	531	-11%

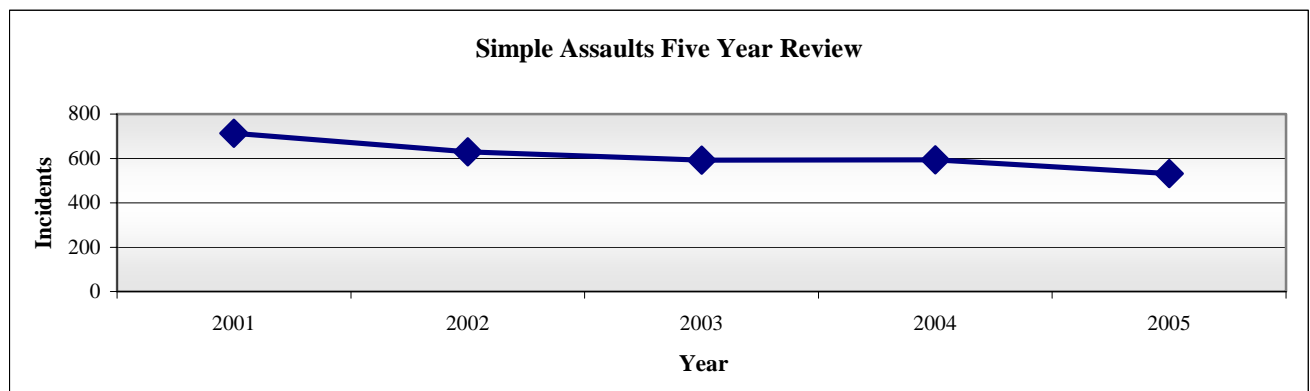
Simple Assaults, unlike aggravated assaults, are not scored among the Part I Crimes (Index Crimes). They do not involve the use of a dangerous weapon and do not cause serious injury. Examples of simple assault include a shove, a punch in the stomach, or a slap in the face.

During the past year, 531 simple assaults were reported to the Cambridge Police Department. This number of incidents represents an 11% decrease over the 594 incidents reported in 2004. The 714 assaults registered in 2001 were the highest in over a decade, given that on average, Cambridge reports 500 to 600 simple assault incidents annually.

Lack of reporting is a problem for calculating exact numbers of simple assaults, because most incidents result in minimal or no injury. Consequently, simple assaults are sometimes dismissed by both victims and offenders as inconsequential.

Similar to aggravated assaults, domestic incidents make up over a third of the total reported simple assaults. Assaults among acquaintances made up 15% of the simple assaults in 2005, and unprovoked incidents follow, accounting for approximately 8% of reports.

Cambridgeport, Area 4 and Riverside reported the most simple assault activity in 2005. All three neighborhoods combined made up half of the reported assaults on police officers. Bar and alcohol related incidents were highest in Riverside, and juvenile/gang incidents were highest in Area 4.



WHERE ASSAULTS TAKE PLACE...

Many assaults take place in the home, particularly family, roommate or acquaintance-related incidents. Assaults taking place on the street are the most common, as these involve domestic disputes as well as arguments that may begin in a commercial establishment and spill onto the street. Restaurant/Bar incidents are common, and can be the result of intoxicated parties becoming disorderly and sometimes violent. Aggravated assaults on school grounds have not significantly increased over the past five years, basically making up between one to two percent of all aggravated assaults. While many juvenile simple assaults take place on school grounds, the more violent aggravated assaults take place on the street in the proximity of residential housing and parks.

Incidents Involving Handguns - A 3-Year Review

